

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 MCT-01 IO-13 A-01
OPR-02 SY-05 DHA-02 /076 W
-----161326Z 018547 /43

O 161225Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 318
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION NATO
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS UNN

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 3802

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SP
SUBJECT: BASQUE ROUNDUP: DEATH TOLL NOW FIVE

REF: (A) MADRID 3786, (B) MADRID 3772

LISBON: ALSO PASS VICE PRESIDENT'S PARTY

SUMMARY: CONTINUED VIOLENCE IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES LEFT
TWO MORE DEAD ON SATURDAY FOR A TOTAL OF FIVE DURING THE
CURRENT WAVE OF DEMONSTRATIONS. TENSIONS EASED SUNDAY,
AND LABOR GROUPS HAVE CALLED A GENERAL STRIKE FOR TODAY WHICH
COULD BE PEACEFUL. NONETHELESS, FURTHER VIOLENCE MAY OCCUR
UNLESS THERE IS CONSIDERABLY MORE RESTRAINT NOT ONLY BY
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DEMONSTRATORS BYT BY POLICE. END SUMMARY.

1. WIDESPREAD CONFRONTATIONS BETWEEN DEMONSTRATORS AND
POLICE IN THE FOUR BASQUE PROVINCES LEFT TWO MORE DEAD
AND A NUMBER INJURED ON SATURDAY, MAY 14. ONE OF THE
VICTIMS WAS KILLED IN A CONFRONTATION IN ORTUELLA, VIZCAYA,
WHILE THE OTHER, AN ELDERLY MAN, APPARENTLY DIED OF SHOCK

WHEN A BULLET (PROVENANCE UNKNOWN) STRUCK NEAR HIM AS HE WATCHED A DEMONSTRATION FROM THIS BALCONY IN PAMPLONA. LATE SATURDAY, VIOLENCE TRAILED OFF AND SUNDAY REPORTEDLY WAS RELATIVELY CALM, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE SCATTERED CONFRONTATIONS, PARTICULARLY IN SAN SEBASTIAN AND PAMPLONA.

2. SIT-INS IN CHURCHES, INCLUDING ONE BY SOME 80 ELECTIONS CANDIDATES FROM ALL MAJOR BASQUE POLITICAL GROUPINGS, AND HUNGER STRIKES CONTINUED THROUGHOUT THE WEEKEND, WITH THE PARTICIPANTS CALLING FOR THE RELEASE OF "ALL" POLITICAL PRISONERS BY MAY 24. AMCONSUL SIBAO REPORTS THAT MANY BARRICADES WERE UP IN THE VIZCAYAN CAPITAL ON SUNDAY, BUT THE POLICE STAYED AWAY, AND THIS APPARENTLY WAS THE ORDER OF THE DAY ELSEWHERE AS WELL. HE ALSO REPORTS THE POLICE HAVE CEASED EMPLOYING ANY LIVE AMMUNITION, AND HAVE REVERTED TO USING RUBBER BULLETS EXCLUSIVELY. VARIOUS BASQUE LABOR GROUPS HAVE CALLED FOR A GENERAL STRIKE TODAY, BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL YET WHETHER ADDITIONAL VIOLENCE WILL ENSUE. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE POSTURE OF THE POLICE.

3. IN RESPONSE TO THIS TRAGIC DETERIORATION IN BASQUE CONDITIONS, THE INTERIOR MINISTRY LATE LAST NIGHT ISSUED THE MOST DETAILED OFFICIAL STATEMENT TO DATE ON THE SITUATION. WHILE REAFFIRMING THE GOVT'S INTENTION TO MAINTAIN PUBLIC ORDER AND PINNING THE VIOLENCE ON INSTIGATORS WHO WANT TO DERAIL THE DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS, THE NOTE ALSO STATES, INTER ALIA, THAT:

--PRISONER RELEASES UNDER THE KING'S AMNESTY/PARDON SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES, 2,786 PERSONS HAVE THUS FAR
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BENEFITED FROM ITS APPLICATION, 2,500 OF WHOM ALREADY WERE IN LIBERTY, MANY OF THEM PENDING TRIAL, WHILE THE REMAINING 286 WERE RECENTLY RELEASED FROM PRISON.

--THERE CURRENTLY ARE 110 POLITICAL PRISONERS INCARCERATED, OF WHICH 27 ARE BASQUES. 19 OF THESE ARE AWAITING TRIAL, WHILE 8 ARE SERVING SENTENCES. THE GOVT HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES STUDYING THE APPLICATION OF THE AMNESTY/PARDON ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS FOR THOSE REMAINING IN PRISON, AND IN ITS LAST MEETING THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS EXTENDED THE AMNESTY/PARDON TO TWO ADDITIONAL CASES (WITHOUT ELABORATION).

--THE OFFICIAL TOLL FROM LAST WEEK'S VIOLENCE IN THE BASQUE PROVINCES STANDS AT 5 DEAD, 2 OF THEM AS THE RESULT OF "UNLUCKY" CIRCUMSTANCES (APPARENTLY REFERENCES TO THE SHOCK VICTIM AND A HIGHWAY WORKER WHO WAS RUN OVER BY A SPEEDING CAR AT A BARRICADE--REFTELS). 33 DEMONSTRATORS HAVE BEEN WOUNDED, FOUR OF THEM GRAVELY, AND 24 POLICE HAVE BEEN INJURED.

4. COMMENT: THE GOVT'S OFFICIAL NOTE CLEARLY IS INTENDED TO CONVEY AN IMAGE OF FIRMNESS AND AUTHORITY TOGETHER WITH AND INDICATION OF THE GOVT'S GOOD INTENTIONS AND STATISTICS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE PROCESS OF PRISONER RELEASES IS A CONTINUING ONE WHICH CAN ONLY BE ENDANGERED THROUGH CONTINUING VIOLENCE. ALTHOUGH THIS IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE MUCH IMMEDIATE EFFECT, IT DOES APPEAR TO INDICATE THAT THE DOOR HAS NOT BEEN CLOSED ON THE RELEASE OF AT LEAST SOME OF THE REMAINING PRISONERS. STABLER

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